

# Romaine Quinn

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State Representative • Serving the 75th Assembly District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Rep. Quinn Discusses Coverage of Pre-Existing Conditions**

*Mary Hoeft:* The Affordable Care Act blocks insurance companies from imposing exorbitant premiums on Americans with pre-existing conditions. In September, people with asthma, diabetes, cancer, depression, anxiety and so many more health issues were one vote away from being unable to purchase affordable health care.

A “yes” from Senator John McCain meant the fate of those with pre-existing conditions would rest in the hands of our state legislature. When I attended a legislative forum at the UW-Barron County in late September, the nation did not yet know that Senator McCain would vote “no.” I went to that forum to ask 75<sup>th</sup> Assembly District State Representative Romaine Quinn for a promise. Would he fight to guarantee that the men and women of Wisconsin with pre-existing conditions have access to affordable healthcare?

I’ve known Romaine for years. He was one of my finest students at the UW-Barron County. I was certain his answer would be “yes.” But that is not what Romaine said. He paused before saying “no.” A hush went through the audience as Romaine went on to explain that everything depended on how much federal money the states received.

On September 27, an article I wrote appeared in local newspapers. It spoke about Romaine’s response. Romaine read my article and called me to say I had misunderstood his response. We decided to write this article together. It is important that Wisconsinites with pre-existing conditions know that Rep. Quinn will fight to make sure affordable healthcare is available to them.

*Romaine Quinn:* What I should have said was, “I already voted to protect people with pre-existing conditions.” In June, the Assembly passed AB 365, introduced by Rep. Riemer, a Democrat. AB 365 prohibits insurance companies from imposing lifetime or annual limits on how much they will cover. When it got to the floor, I proudly voted for it -- in fact, we amended it to make it even better. That amendment prevented health care companies from imposing a pre-existing condition exclusion. It also instructed the Wisconsin Commissioner of Insurance to assist individuals with preexisting conditions in finding coverage.

So why did I say “no?” Although Mary asked if I would fight to guarantee affordable coverage for people with preexisting conditions, I interpreted the question as would the State of Wisconsin promise to *pay* for everyone with a pre-existing condition? Without knowing any details, I

couldn't make that promise.

Before I vote on legislation or make a promise, I need to be able to evaluate its impact. Until the federal government finalizes what it intends to change in our healthcare system, I am unable to guarantee the state's role.

Like many of you, I have family and friends with preexisting conditions. I want nothing more than for them to be able to get the care they need and at an affordable price. Unfortunately, various groups have taken my answer as an opportunity to characterize me as heartless. I want to thank Mary for working with me in order to clear the air on this issue.

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